FP-21-10 First Divorce Rate in the U.S., 2019

Leslie Reynolds
Bowling Green State University, reynoll@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles

Part of the Family, Life Course, and Society Commons

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Repository Citation
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/252
In 2019, the overall U.S. divorce rate reached a forty-year low of 15.5 divorces per 1,000 married women (FP-20-25). However, the overall divorce rate includes divorces from both first marriages and higher-order marriages. Since first marriages are less likely to end in divorce than remarriages (Cohen, 2016), it is important to examine the first divorce rate separately. Using the 2019 American Community Survey 1-year estimates, we examine women’s first divorce rate (defined as the number of first marriages that ended in divorce per 1,000 first marriages) among first married women 18 years and older. This Family Profile is an update to previous profiles on the first divorce rate (FP-20-02, FP-18-15, FP-16-19, FP-14-09, FP-11-09, and FP-10-06).

**Trends in the First Divorce Rate**

- The first divorce rate has decreased overall since 2008.
- After the divorce rate plateaued from 2009 to 2012, the first divorce rate declined to 14.9 divorces per 1,000 women in a first marriage in 2018 and remained at this 10-year low in 2019.
- An estimated 741,163 women experienced a first divorce in 2019.

**Figure 1. First Divorce Rate for Women 18 and Older, 2008-2019**

Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2019

**First Divorce Rate by Race and Ethnicity**

- In 2019, Black women experienced the highest first divorce rate (26.8).
- Asian women had the lowest first divorce rate (8.5).
- There was a nativity gap among Hispanics, with native-born Hispanics having a higher first divorce rate (22.6) than foreign-born Hispanics (13.2).

**An estimated 741,163 women experienced a first divorce in 2019.**

Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2019
First Divorce Rate by Educational Attainment

- Women with some college education but no degree (18.7) and women with an associate’s degree (17.0) had the highest first divorce rates.
- The lowest first divorce rates were observed among women with a bachelor’s degree (13.2) and women with a master’s degree or higher (11.5).

Figure 3. First Divorce Rate for Women 18 and Older by Educational Attainment, 2019

Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2019

References:


Suggested Citation

This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.